



Fire,
Security,
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Surveillance

"QUALITY AND PEACE OF MIND SINCE 1969"

(410) 766-8336

THE ADVISOR

*A Quarterly Security Guide Especially
Prepared for the Clients and Friends of A.A.S.C.O.*

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Don't let nagging doubts about the security of your home spoil your vacation. Clip this vacation checklist to make sure your security strategies will stay in force while you're away.

- Notify the central station and tell them the dates you intend to be away and give them a contact number where you can be reached.
- If your system isn't monitored, leave a contact number with a neighbor who's watching your home while you're away.
- Don't discuss your travel plans in public places. A criminal or a criminal's accomplice could overhear you, follow you home and then return while you're away on vacation.
- Stop your mail, newspapers and other deliveries.
- Arrange to have your lawn mowed while you're away.
- Ask a neighbor to put out your

trash cans and recycle bins on collection day and then retrieve them.

- Don't change the message on your answering machine, and never leave a message that says you're out-of-town. Call your machine periodically while you're away and retrieve your messages.
- Leave window blinds and shades in their normal positions.
- Set your thermostat to a higher temperature but don't turn it off altogether. A silent air conditioning system on a hot summer day is a sure sign that no one is home.
- A few days before you leave on vacation, set and activate automatic timers for your lights and a TV or radio to be sure they are working properly.
- When you leave on vacation, turn the ringers on your phones down to their minimum setting, or off completely, so no one outside can hear a ringing phone going unanswered.

- Unplug your automatic garage door opener.
- Before you lock the front door, do a final walk-through to make certain all unnecessary appliances are turned off, all windows and doors are locked and all non-essential appliances and electronics are either turned off and/or unplugged.
- Arm your alarm system, lock the door and enjoy your vacation. ❖

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- ◆ Workplace Security
- ◆ Reducing False Alarms
- ◆ Make An "Internet User Contract" With Your Kids
- ◆ Children Home Alone



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Workplace Security

While many of us may have several close friends where we work, most coworkers remain casual acquaintances to many of those they work with.

By its very nature, this *professional* relationship with coworkers can lead employees to feel that there is an inherent sense of safety and security at the workplace. However, numerous events in recent years have taught everyone that such feelings are not always justified, and that feeling secure without taking precautions can be a costly, and even deadly, mistake.

Here are some simple ways to stay safe while you're at work:

- Know the neighborhood. Call the local police department in the area where you work and find out what the neighborhood's crime rate statistics are. Being aware of the various crimes that have taken place—and who the victims were—can help you to be more alert about your personal safety when going to and from work.
- If your workplace has an access control system, never give out keypad code information or lend your magnetic-strip swipe card to anyone, ever. Depending on your firm's system and procedures, tell visitors or delivery people to use an intercom, buzz them in, or have security meet them at the door, whichever is appropriate.
- Avoid working alone in the building after hours. Arrange for transportation when you have to work late rather than risk waiting alone at a train or bus stop.

We may consider it a sad commentary of our times that such considerations need to be discussed at all. Unfortunately, the old adage about it being *better to be safe than sorry* is more true today than ever before. ❖

Reducing False Alarms

When false alarms occur frequently, everyone involved gets frustrated. Here's a few pointers to help reduce false alarm incidents.

1. Make certain that you—and everyone who has a key to your home—knows how to operate your security system. According to industry statistics, over 75 percent of all false alarms are caused by individuals who didn't know how to properly arm or disarm the system.

2. Nearly 33 percent of all false alarms are caused by someone who does not live at the location where the security system is installed. Make sure you instruct anyone who has access to your home on the proper way to operate the system.

3. Make sure you are comfortable with the amount of time you have to arm and disarm your system. If you feel rushed or panicky about operating your system's controls, call us and we'll make appropriate time adjustments for you.

4. Keep pets, fans, heaters, balloons, etc., away from motion sensor areas when your system is armed. Pets cause over 10 percent of all motion-related false alarms.

5. Before leaving your home, make certain that all protected windows and doors are closed and locked. Over 15 percent of all false alarms are caused when the alarm is set and there is a protected door or window that is ajar.

6. Test your system regularly to make certain that all components are functioning properly—for your security, and for false alarm prevention.

If a false alarm does occur, don't panic. Enter your disarm code carefully to reset your security system. Do not leave your home until the system is reset or until the central monitoring station calls and you give them your password or ID code.

The occasional false alarm can be dealt with. Frequent false alarms can result in serious consequences and endanger your family and property in the event of a real emergency. ❖



CHILDREN HOME ALONE

Make An “Internet User Contract” With Your Kids

One technique for helping young children and teens to understand the ground rules of being online is to create an “Internet User Contract.” Here are some of the topics that child safety experts suggest you include regarding Internet usage:

- Never give out personal information such as an address, phone number, or the name or location of a school without parental permission.
- Tell parents right away about any information on the Internet that is frightening or threatening.
- Never agree to meet with someone who you’ve met online without parental permission. Any approved meeting should be in a public place, and a parent should be there.
- Never send anyone a photograph over the Internet without parental approval.
- Don’t respond to any messages that are mean or suggestive. Children should understand that anything that makes them uncomfortable should be avoided and reported to their parents.

An open dialog about the use of “parental controls” and the ground rules for going online is an essential part of any parent/child “Internet User Contract.” The Internet can provide a wealth of knowledge and useful data.

It can also be a vast wasteland of deceit and danger for young minds. Vigilance and rational reasons for “rules” are the best ways to keep your children safe in cyberspace. ❖



Whether you’re a parent or grandparent, odds are that there are children home alone somewhere in your family circle. The demands of today’s two-income, two-career family structure has significantly increased the number of children who, once they are old enough to accept the responsibility, are “on-their-own” at home for some portion of the day. Here are some ways you can help prepare them for the unexpected:

- Make certain that every child in your home knows how to arm and disarm your security system.
- Make certain that every child in your home, even the youngest, understands that dialing 911 is the quickest way to summon help—and that he or she knows the basics of 911 protocol: their name, their address, their phone number and to always stay on the telephone until the 911 dispatcher tells them to hang up the phone.
- Make certain your children know how to contact you, or an alternative adult, in the event of an emergency.
- Make certain your children know that they should not open the front door to strangers or ever allow any stranger to come into the home.
- Make certain that your children understand the dangerous consequences of playing with matches, cigarette lighters, or other fire sources—including the kitchen range—and that they know to leave the house and seek help at a neighbor’s home in the event of a fire.
- If you own firearms, make certain that the guns and ammunition are stored separately—and that both are under lock and key.

Children can be safe and secure on those occasions when you can’t be home with them. All it takes is a little instruction to help them know and understand the things they need to do—and not do—when they’re home alone. ❖

Dear Valued Customer,

Welcome to our Spring 2012 newsletter. With warmer weather approaching, it is time to review your security plan. While you are taking the time to plan your landscaping, please take a look at the exterior of your home or business. Consider trimming any foundation plantings to deter intruders from hiding in and around your property.

Secure your home and businesses against intrusion, both natural and criminal. As we prepare for the busy spring season we sometimes overlook basic security. Be sure to lock your windows and doors, and arm your security system each time you leave your home, and at the end of your business day.

To our clients with VOIP or FIOS. If you have changed or are considering changing to VOIP or FIOS for your telephone service, please see our website www.okaasco.com, Our Company tab, News drop down. The article: **Are You Considering FIOS or VOIP?** has some interesting information and important concerns to contemplate when shopping telephone services.

Also, please remember to test your alarm system.

Sincerely,

Get The Latest Security Advantage For Your Security System With Back-up Cellular Monitoring

Please call for details

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Ask your grandmother, or any elderly citizen, what "crimes" they are most afraid of and more than likely they will say they are afraid of being robbed and/or assaulted when they are out in public. Statistically, however, their fears are focused in the wrong direction.

As people grow older their chances of becoming victims of physical attack or street-crime decreases. Older citizens are more apt to become victims of fraud, scams and con games. And, they are more apt to be victimized by "polite and apparently trustworthy" individuals rather than by aggressive street-thugs or "suspicious and shifty" criminal types.

Do you know someone who is overly concerned about being victimized? Here are some common sense things they should keep in mind which can reduce anxiety and help prevent crimes:

- Go places with your friends or family, not alone.
- Carry your purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps.
- Carry your wallet in an inside coat pocket or a front trouser pocket.
- Don't carry credit cards or large amounts of cash with you if you don't need them.
- Use direct deposit for any checks you receive on a regular basis.
- Whether you are the driver of a vehicle or a passenger,

always keep the doors locked.

- Sit close to the driver when riding in a bus.
- If something or someone makes you feel uneasy, trust your instincts and leave.

When it comes to fraud, scams and con games, remember, the would-be perpetrators are going to be some of the nicest people you'll ever meet. A con artist's sole purpose is to make you believe that he or she is kind, honest and likable and has only your best interests at heart. Always be cautious and suspicious whenever a stranger wants to be your new best friend—particularly if there is money and/or valuables involved. ❖

